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Message Text

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43
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 285
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AMEMBASSY LISBON

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E.O. 11652: N/A
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SUBJECT: EC AID TO PORTUGAL

REFS: EC BRUSSELS 241, 75 EC BRUSSELS 11429

1. IN MEETINGS WITH EC COMMISSION VICE PRESIDENT SOAMES, EUROPEAN INVESTMENT BANK VICE PRESIDENT SIR RAYMOND BELL, AND OTHER COMMISSION OFFICIALS IN BRUSSELS JANUARY 13, AMBASSADOR CARLUCCI STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF DEMONSTRATING PROGRESS UNDER THE EC EMERGENCY AID PROGRAM BEFORE THE APRIL 25 NATIONAL ELECTIONS IN PORTUGAL. SIR RAYMOND INDICATED THAT PROSPECTS FOR ACTION ON AT LEAST SOME OF THE GOP PROJECT PROPOSALS AT THE EIB'S BIMONTHLY MEETING DURING FIRST HALF OF APRIL WERE GOOD. THIS WOULD DEPEND OF COURSE ON THE FINDINGS OF THE EIG TEAM PRESENTLY IN PORTUGAL, AS WELL AS THE PROJECT DOCUMENTATION PROVIDED BY PORTUGUESE. BUT ASSUMING THAT EVERYTHING IS IN ORDER, EIB WOULD BE ABLE TO ACT QUICKLY.

2. COMMISSION OFFICIALS CONFIRMED PREVIOUS COMMENTS ABOUT THE IMPRESSIVE PERFORMANCE OF FASCO VIERA DE ALMEIDA, HEAD OF THE
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GOP DELEGATION TO THE JOINT EC-PORTUGUESE COMMISSION MEETING

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ON JANUARY 9. THEY SAID THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME THEY HAD HEARD A PRESENTATION FROM THE PORTUGUESE WHICH WAS WELL THOUGHT OUT AND RELATED TO THE LONG TERM RATIONALE FOR WHAT THE GOP WISHES TO ACCOMPLISH. THEY ATTRIBUTED THIS TO ALMEIDA'S EFFECTIVENESS AND TO THE DISAPPEARANCE OVER THE PAST FEW MONTHS OF THE "POCKETS OF OPPOSITION" IN THE PORTUGUESE MINISTRIES TO WESTERN ASSISTANCE WHICH HAD PREVIOUSLY STALLED THE DEVELOPMENT OF COORDINATED PLANS.

3. ASKED ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF LIBERALIZING THE EXPORT OF PORTUGUESE WINE TO THE EC, COMMISSION OFFICIALS DESCRIBED THE SITUATION AS "HOPELESS" IN VIEW OF THE OPPOSITION OF SOME MEMBER STATES. ON THE WHOLE, HOWEVER, THEY ANTICIPATE THAT THE EC FOREIGN MINISTERS COUNCIL ON JANUARY 20 WILL APPROVE A "REASONABLY GOOD MANDATE" FOR THE FORTHCOMING NEGOTIATIONS UNDER THE EC-PORTUGAL TRADE AGREEMENT. THEY EXPECT THE EC POSITION WILL BE FORTHCOMING ON THE FINANCIAL PROTOCOL, SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS FOR MIGRANT WORKERS, TARIFF REDUCTIONS, AND TEXTILES. ON WINE, HOWEVER, THERE WILL ONLY BE A "SYMBOLIC" INCREASE IN THE CEILING.

4. THE POSSIBILITY OF EC FOOD AID FOR PORTUGAL CAME UP DURING AMBASSADOR CARLUCCI'S MEETING WITH SOAMES. SOAMES SAID THE COMMISSION WOULD LOOK INTO THE PROSPECTS FOR SENDING MEAT AND DRIED SKIMMED MILK TO PORTUGAL UNDER ITS FOOD AID PROGRAM. HE WILL ALSO TRY TO MAKE AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO LISBON BEFORE THE ELECTION.GREENWALD

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